2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

Dragalevtsy. In general, though the division of labor was traditional, the specialization of occupation was increasing. Though unemployment was absent from the village, this in no way implied that all had the kind of work they wanted. It was astounding enough that even in times of world depression all did have a way of earning a living.

In Bulgaria, as in most countries, property passed from parent to child. There too the laws governing this transfer were very complicated. However, as a general principle in the villages sons inherited twice as much land as daughters. Usually the sons received equal amounts, but a father while still alive could divide the land, taking an equal share for himself, which he later gave to his favorite son. Quite often a sister said when the time of division arrived: "Why should I take land away from my brothers?" and forfeited her claim. In some cases she would sell her share of the estate cheaply to a favorite brother. If she was married, however, her husband could insist that she take what was her due and might even go to court to pursue the case. Every year there were a few Dragalevtsy people involved in long-drawn-out lawsuits originating over the division of inherited land. More often than not, lawyers' fees used up a great part of the value of the property.

A heavy inheritance tax accompanied any such transfer of property from the father to his children. One man at work in the hayfield took time off to tell me of the arrangement being worked out in his family:

"Our father, who is still living, told us three brothers to divide his property equally among us. We have not made the division officially as yet, because if we did we would have to pay an inheritance tax amounting to about four hundred dollars. We divide the land by lot. We take strips of land, both meadows and fields of equal value, and draw lots for the strips. Of course, our father has kept some of the land for himself, but we shall divide that among the three of us after his death."

The most serious conflicts in the village arose when there was disagreement over the division of a patrimony. Brother turned against brother, and whole families became involved in the dispute. There

2;Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

was also conflict over the location of boundary stones. At first I could scarcely believe my eyes when I was shown how the peasants distinguished their fields. Taking some landmark such as a tree, a bend in the road, or a stream, the peasants marked off their strips by small piles of stone. Fences and hedgerows were impracticable because the strips were too small to justify the expense of enclosure. Since every farmer possessed several strips, possibilities of conflict over the boundaries were numerous. The wonder is that there was so little trouble, in view of the fact that every foot of the strip must be utilized if the farmer was to make any profit.

Animals too proved a source of dispute. The oxen, for instance, strayed into an unprotected field and did considerable damage to the growing crop. The person incurring loss often took the matter to the mayor for trial in his magistrate's court. Once an effort was made to have all funds collected from such disputes turned over to the local *Chitalishte,* or Library Association, but this received little public support. For some time there was very bad feeling between the shepherds and the dairymen over the question of pasturage. The *Obshtina,* or local government, passed an ordinance that grazing should be done on one's own land and the common pasture abolished. The shepherds, accustomed to roaming over a considerable area in a day's time, were violently opposed to the new measure; those possessing five or six head of cattle naturally favored it.

Other types of conflict also arose over animals. The widow Zdravka, in explaining to me why she was not on good terms with her neighbor Dimiter, brought another case of disagreement over livestock to my attention:

"Just before St. Peter's Day, Dimiter's dogs fell upon my sow as she passed his yard on her way home from pasture. The pig, which was to bear young the next day, became frightened and fell into a ditch. I immediately went to the veterinarian who told me that the pig's young would be stillborn, and sure enough, they were. I went to the priest and the mayor to ask for justice, but Dimiter told them that he didn't let his dogs out and the accident wasn't his fault. Since he was a man, nothing was done to him and I can't do anything about it myself."